Don't mock those who stand up for Mother Earth

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Body

Last Friday, I went to Clergue Park for the climate action event. It was part of a worldwide phenomenon, sparked by 16-year-old Greta Thunberg, trying to encourage action on climate change before it is too late.

Thunberg shamed politicians at the UN last month, asking, "How dare you not do more to protect the planet. How dare you ignore the science?" Locally, we gathered, and a petition was circulated to have the city commit to pollution prevention and control standards for industrial sites. Then we walked to the Civic Centre. Three federal candidates were at the rally, but not a single elected city councillor was present. When we arrived, a well-respected local conservationist and explorer went inside to invite the mayor. He was turned away at the door. Why was he not welcome in his own city hall? I believe the mayor would have appreciated the invitation.

I don't think that the mayor or any city councillor would have objected to the messages at the rally. People spoke of clean water, clean air, clean soil, and the need to protect these now and for the generations that follow. What human would disagree with that? On social media, people mocked the rally, and asked if all of us biked or walked, and if we didn't, they said we were hypocrites.

Many there did walk, many did bike, others drove and carpooled, some drove electric cars, and yes, others drove alone, but want to learn more, and become more engaged in the conversation.

No one should be mocked for wanting a cleaner environment; not any of us locally attending a rally, and not Greta Thunberg, who has become a target for vocal haters.

"I'm not going to listen to a 16-year old. What the hell does she know?" And so much worse. It seems that the fact that she is acting much older and wiser than her years makes people who are older, and should be wiser, act much younger ... like spoiled children.

I'm clear now that any hatred toward the green movement is based on the inability to deal with the possibility that we are significantly damaging the planet. No one wants to believe that our house is on fire, and that we may indeed have started the fire.

People don't like their lifestyle choices questioned. Ignorance truly is bliss. It's easier to cry "fake news" and discuss what the Kardashians are wearing, than to stop and critically think about the effects of industrialization and corporatization on the planet.

Thunberg points to the "fairytale of eternal economic growth" and we need to listen. Corporations are set up to maximize shareholder wealth ... Period. Until the Earth is factored in as a majority shareholder of every corporation, I question our ability to get the damage reduced and or reversed.

Don't mock those who stand up for Mother Earth

Not until politicians'campaigns are forbidden funding from corporations can we trust our democracies to help save the planet.

I can only hope that the upcoming election will be a moment for one or more parties to say: "We stand with Greta Thunberg and Autumn Peltier and Planet Earth" and to articulate what they will do now. There are hundreds of thousands of voters who were at those rallies, including first-timers like me, who were inspired by our youth's passion and perseverance, who need to know how to cast their vote in October.

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